THE ROLE OF THE DICE

By

David Lambertson
INT. RESIDENTIAL HOME/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

CHUCK (35), crew cut, square jaw, clad in a police uniform cuts his steak at the dining room table. He pops a piece in his mouth – chews purposefully.

Eating across from him is HANNAH (29). She wears a little too much make-up. Her large breasts cascade over a tight blouse.

The CLINKS of their silverware are the only sounds.

HANNAH
You're awful quiet. Something happen at work today?

Chuck stares at Hannah – continues to chew as he sizes up the question. He cuts off another piece of steak.

HANNAH
Well?

CHUCK
Yeah, but I don't want to talk about it right now.

HANNAH
You know your counselor said it was bad to bottle things up.

CHUCK
We'll talk later. I promise.

HANNAH
Well, the Petersons are supposed to be here at seven. We can cancel if you're not up to it?

Chuck wipes the corner of his mouth with a napkin, stands up and removes his service revolver from his holster and places it on a nearby table.

CHUCK
Naw. I'm up for a game.

Chuck stands up.

CHUCK
I'm going to change.
A MONOPOLY BOARD sits in the center of a dining table – a game obviously in progress.

Chuck, now dressed in casual clothes, sits at the end of the table. He gulps back the remainder of a beer.

DEMETRI (35), sculpted hair, expensive jewelry, crisply ironed Khakis and a dress shirt sits to the right of Chuck.

STEPHANIE (28) seven months pregnant with a simple, innocent face – a farm girl type, sits to the left of Chuck. She looks at two dice in the center of table. She's rolled a four.

Stephanie picks up a SILVER THIMBLE playing piece and moves it four spaces along the Monopoly board.

STEPHANIE
Ah, community chest.

Stephanie removes a yellow card from a deck in the middle of the board.

STEPHANIE
(reading the card)
You have won second prize in a beauty contest. Collect ten dollars.
(proudly)
Second place - not bad.

DEMETRI
Don't let it go to your head, sweetie. Caitlin Jenner was first place.

Demetri laughs too hard at his own joke. Chuck doesn't react.

DEMETRI
Oh c'mon, man. That was pretty funny.

STEPHANIE
I thought it was insensitive.

CHUCK
It was neither.

Chuck takes another swig of beer.

DEMETRI
Man, Chuck - lighten up. What is it with you tonight?
Hannah enters the room carrying a beer bottle in one hand and a wine bottle in the other.

Hannah places the beer in front of Chuck - waits for acknowledgement. None is forthcoming.

    HANNAH
    Geez, you're welcome.

Hannah takes a seat opposite Chuck. She pours wine in her glass and leans over and fills Demetri's glass. Demetri ogles her breast as she pours. Chuck notices.

    HANNAH
    So, whose turn?

    STEPHANIE
    I just went. It's your turn.

    DEMETRI
    Chuck, did I tell you that we closed the Madison deal today?
    Pretty nice commission, if I do say so myself.

    CHUCK
    (to Hannah)
    Roll.

    HANNAH
    Chuck, you're being rude.
    (to Demetri)
    That's wonderful news.
    (to Stephanie)
    You must be very proud.

Stephanie stretches her hand across the table and caresses Demetri's hand.

    STEPHANIE
    I am. I think we're going to get the house on Beeker Street now.

    HANNAH
    Wow! A baby on the way and a new house. That deserves a toast.

Hannah raises her wine glass and clinks it against Demetri's, then against Stephanie's water glass. Demetri motions to toast Chuck. Chuck doesn't respond.

    CHUCK
    Roll.
Hannah sneers at Chuck, picks up the dice and tumbles them on the board.

    HANNAH
    Seven.
    (moving game piece)
    One, two, three, four, five, six, seven.

Hannah places her SILVER DOG on KENTUCKY AVENUE.

    CHUCK
    Cunt-tucky avenue.

    HANNAH
    Pardon?

    CHUCK
    I own it. One house - ninety dollars.

Hannah counts out ninety dollars in play money and slides it over to Chuck.

    HANNAH
    Thought I heard something else.

Demetri picks up the dice.

    DEMETRI
    My turn.

Demetri rattles the dice in his hand.

    DEMETRI
    C'mon - c'mon.

Demetri tosses the dice. Two sixes roll out.

    DEMETRI
    Yes.

Demetri moves his silver RACE CAR playing piece twelve spaces on the board landing on PARK PLACE.

    DEMETRI
    Now that's my kind of property.
    I'll buy it.

Demetri counts out $350 in play money and tosses it in the games's bank - a cardboard cut out.

From a pile of cards, Stephanie hands Chuck the PARK PLACE PROPERTY CARD. He raises it to his lips and kisses it.
And with Boardwalk, that gives me a monopoly. I'll buy one hotel.

Demetri counts out $1,000 in play money and tosses it in the bank. He extends his hand out towards Chuck.

DEMETRI
If you would be so kind.

Chuck stares at Demetri as he removes a RED HOTEL PLAY PIECE from a small pile.

CHUCK
You do enjoy hotels, don't you, Demetri?

Chuck flips the hotel play piece towards Demetri, hitting him in the face.

DEMETRI
Hey!

HANNAH
Chuck! Say you're sorry.

Chuck leans back - takes a long sip of beer. There is an awkward silence. Stephanie starts to get up.

STEPHANIE
Maybe this is a good time for us to go. It's getting late anyway.

CHUCK
You enjoy hotels too. Don't you, Hannah?

HANNAH
How many beers have you had?

Stephanie stands up.

STEPHANIE
Okay, really, it's been fun but we should get going. Demetri has an early tee time anyway.

CHUCK
We're not done playing.

DEMETRI
(rising from his seat)
But I think we are. Honestly, your behavior tonight --
Chuck leans over and grabs his service revolver from the table adjacent to him. He points it at Demetri.

**CHUCK**
Sit the fuck down. Both of you.

**HANNAH**
Chuck? What's going on?

**STEPHANIE**
Oh my God. Oh my God.

Chuck cocks the trigger as he continues to point the gun at Demetri's chest.

Demetri, shaking like a leaf, motions for Stephanie to take a seat. She, as nervous as Demetri, complies.

**CHUCK**
I believe it was my turn.

Chuck, holding the revolver in his right hand picks up the dice with his left hand - rattles them a bit.

**CHUCK**
(to Stephanie)
Sorry about the outburst. It was just the hotel that set me off.

**STEPHANIE**
(hyperventilating)
I - I - da - da - don't understand.

Chuck tosses the dice.

**CHUCK**
Ah, eight the hard way.
(to Stephanie)
Relax. Hannah, you want to help her out? She doesn't understand.

Hannah stares at Chuck. Mouths "what" as she extends her hands outward.

Chuck moves his playing piece eight spaces, landing on "GO".

**CHUCK**
Excellent.

Chuck removes $200 in play money from the bank.
CHUCK
Demetri, Hannah seems a bit reluctant. You want to answer Stephanie's question?

DEMETRI
I don't even remember what the question was?

Chuck hands Stephanie the dice.

CHUCK
(to Stephanie)
Your turn.
(to Demetri)
She wanted to know why the hotel set me off. Please - chime in.
(to Stephanie)
It's okay - roll.

Tears stream down Stephanie's face as she tosses the dice on the game board - a seven rolls out.

HANNAH
Chuck, stop this.

CHUCK
Well, guess it's up to me. Anyway, on patrol today, I drove by a hotel. Ironically, on Atlantic Avenue. I saw Hannah's car there. Quite odd because she was supposed to be with her Mom.

HANNAH
That wasn't me. Must have just been the same car.

Chuck points at Stephanie's silver thimble game piece.

CHUCK
Finish your turn.

Stephanie shakes her head.

CHUCK
Stephanie, please don't make me angrier.

DEMETRI
Leave her alone.

Stephanie, now crying, moves her silver thimble seven spaces. She lands on COMMUNITY CHEST.
Chuck gives Stephanie a nod. Stephanie picks up a COMMUNITY CHEST CARD from the stack in the center of the game board.

CHUCK
Well?

STEPHANIE
(read/weeping)
Life Insurance matures. Collect one hundred dollars. Please, I want to go home.

CHUCK
Hold on to that. It may come in handy. Now, where was I? Oh, yes - the hotel.
(to Hannah)
So, you don't think I know the plates to our own car?

Hannah's lip quiver.

HANNAH
It's not what you're thinking. I knew you were off your meds. Let them go - we can talk.

CHUCK
But then Stephanie would miss out. That wouldn't be fair. Here, I'll explain.

Chuck picks up a HOTEL PLAY PIECE and places it on the ATLANTIC AVENUE property.

CHUCK
That's the hotel.

Chuck surveys the board.

CHUCK
Only one car. Oh, I'll use this for Hannah.

Chuck picks up the SILVER DOG play piece and places it in front of the hotel.

CHUCK
It is a bitch after all.

Chuck picks up the SILVER CAR play piece and places it next to the SILVER DOG.
CHUCK
And that's Demetri.
(to Demetri)
Sorry, they don't have a Mercedes.
This will have to do.

STEPHANIE
I don't understand.

CHUCK
Demetri was in the hotel with her.

STEPHANIE
(to Demetri)
Is that true?

Demetri doesn't respond - just shakes his head.

CHUCK
I ran the plates. It was his car. I also checked with the front desk. The room was in his name.

STEPHANIE
Demetri, why would you be in a hotel?

CHUCK
He was fucking Hannah.

DEMETRI
I wouldn't have ever done --

HANNAH
Or just tell him for Christ sakes. He knows.

DEMETRI
(to Hannah)
Stop.

HANNAH
(to Chuck)
Yeah, we were at the hotel - fucking! Are you happy now. And it's your fault. The fucking meds you take make you catatonic. You know, I'm relieved to just get this off my --

BANG - a shot fired through the center of Hannah's chest.
Smoke from the barrel of Chuck's revolver wafts in the air.
A large red dot on Hannah's blouse grows ominously. Hannah moves her mouth but cannot speak. Her eyes widen and then her head falls backwards - dead.

CHUCK
Chest? Ironically, I think she was going to say chest.

Stephanie stands. Her mouth opens to scream but nothing comes out. Her eyes roll back in her head as she faints and falls to the floor.

DEMETRI
Oh my God. Fuck! Have you lost your mind?

Demetri breathes heavily - beads of sweat pepper his face.

CHUCK
Well, seems that one of us is going to have to go with Hannah. Do you believe in fate?

DEMETRI
(shaking)
No.

CHUCK
I do.

Chuck places his playing piece on the game board on a CHANCE space.

CHUCK
That's exactly seven spaces away from "Go to Jail".

Chuck picks up the dice.

CHUCK
If I roll an eight or better, I win. Seven or less, you win.

DEMETRI
Win? What the fuck are you talking about? For the love of God, stop this.

Chuck rattles the dice in his hand.

CHUCK
Well, one of us has got to die and if I'm going to jail, I'd rather it be me. If not, it's got to be you.
CHUCK (CONT'D)
The odds are actually in your favor.

DEMETRI
Stop. I beg you.

Chuck tosses the dice on the board. Each die displays a five.

CHUCK
A hard ten. More than enough.

Chuck extends his arm and points the gun at Demetri's head.

DEMETRI
No - no. Think of Stephanie for God sakes. We're having a baby.

Chuck pauses - stares at Demetri then looks at Stephanie still out on the floor.

CHUCK
Maybe you're right.

Chuck places the barrel of the revolver in his mouth - wraps his lips around it.

DEMETRI
(nearly sobbing)
Thank you.

Chuck removes the revolver from his mouth.

CHUCK
But a game is a game.

BANG! - a bullet splashes through Demetri's forehead. Blood spatters on the white wall behind him.

Chuck - revolver still in hand, oddly calm, scans the room. He spots his keys and wallet on the counter, walks over and picks them up. He heads towards the door and then stops.

CHUCK
Oh shit.

He returns to the dining room table and picks up an ORANGE CARD from the game board.

Stephanie stirs awake. Panic hits her eyes as she sees the gun in Chuck's hand. She shields her face with her hands.
CHUCK
No - no. I'm not going to hurt you.
None of this was your fault. I just
forgot something.

Chuck flips the orange card over - in bold black letters it
reads: "GET OUT OF JAIL FREE."

CHUCK
Don't lose that life insurance card
you got. Demetri lost the game.

Chuck turns and walks towards the front door. Stephanie SOBS
in the background.

CHUCK
(opening the door)
Hmmm, maybe we should have played
Sorry.

Chuck exits. Stephanie screams.

FADE OUT.